

DURENBERGER IN DECEMBER

As chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Sen. David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.) has been a chief player in congressional investigations of the controversy over the administration's shipment of arms to Iran, and the diversion of funds from that operation to the Nicaraguan contra rebels. Since the beginning of the month, he has said:

Dec. 1: "I am satisfied that we are getting the kind of candor we were hoping to get and the kind of cooperation from the administration that the president and others have promised."

Dec. 2: "I would say that, with all of the witnesses that we have heard from, I have found them very forthcoming, more than we might have anticipated . . . [The committee] learned a great deal from today's witnesses. They are being very cooperative."

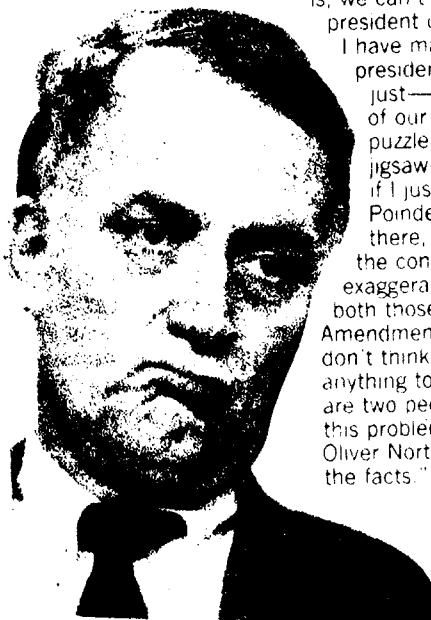
Dec. 3: "In a legal sense I don't have any difficulty with [Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter and Lt. Col. Oliver L. North refusing on Fifth Amendment grounds to testify]. In a practical sense, I think they're making a mistake."

Dec. 4: "I am just concerned about the fact that the country needs to put this behind it as soon as possible. The president is in the best position to do that at this point in time. Both on the Iran side and particularly on the side of the Central American connection, the president can find the answers to those questions far more readily than we can."

Dec. 8: "[There has been] some effort on the part of some people to avoid [committee subpoenas] . . . There have been other people who have been less than forthcoming deliberately . . . I still feel the key as far as the American public is concerned is for Ollie North and John Poindexter to tell Ronald Reagan everything they know and for Ronald Reagan to tell the rest of us."

Dec. 12: "It's bad enough that we have an admiral and a Marine colonel who have asserted the Fifth Amendment . . . If they're such heroes, then why are they deserting their country when they are finally put to the true test of their commitment to this country? They're putting their narrow personal interests or maybe misplaced loyalty to some of their friends over the national interest they are sworn to uphold . . . Somebody's going to have to define what a national hero is . . . A national hero doesn't come in here and stiff the whole country . . . Maybe the president can help them. The president has to make his own decision. He's living with this 24 hours a day; the rest of the country is not. It's his problem. He has to decide how to resolve it . . ."

Dec. 14: "We're in a stymie. And the stymie is, we can't get the facts. I believe the president doesn't have the facts. I think I have many more facts than the president of the United States. We just—we're in probably the 40th day of our investigation. It's like a jigsaw puzzle. I've got 90—if it's a 100-piece jigsaw—I've got 95 of the pieces. And if I just had Ollie North and John Poindexter to put the rest of them in there, we'd have it . . . I've come to the conclusion that we have all exaggerated their personal liability, of both those fellows. Taking the Fifth Amendment continues to exaggerate it. I don't think either of those fellows has anything to fear from the facts . . . There are two people in America who can solve this problem today: John Poindexter and Oliver North. Those two people know the facts."



—Compiled by James Schwartz